

PROPOSED ACTION & ALTERNATIVES

Point Mugu Sea Range

Draft Environmental Impact Statement



The Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action

The Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division (NAWCWPNS) Point Mugu has a need to meet the established mission to conduct state-of-the-art weapons system testing and evaluation by providing a safe, operationally realistic, and thoroughly instrumented Sea Range testing environment and to maintain the level of operational readiness of our military services by providing a realistic training environment. The evolution of international threats and operational technologies has increased the number and type of military operations that require large water ranges for testing and training activities. Consequently, the role of NAWCWPNS Point Mugu as a test and training center has become even more critical.

To meet the testing and training need, the purpose of the proposed action is:

- 1) To accommodate Theater Missile Defense testing and training;
- 2) To accommodate an increase in current levels of training exercises; and
- 3) To modernize facilities at Point Mugu and San Nicolas Island.

Current Operations on the Point Mugu Sea Range

The Point Mugu Sea Range supports Department of Defense testing and training operations on and off the coast of Southern California. Most testing on the Sea Range falls into five general categories, or scenarios. These five categories consist of the following: 1) air-to-air tests, 2) air-to-surface tests, 3) surface-to-air tests, 4) surface-to-surface tests, and 5) subsurface-to-surface tests. The category name describes where a test article, primarily a missile, is launched from and where its target is located. For example, a "surface-to-air" test may involve the launching of a test missile from a ship and engaging an airborne target, such as a drone, launched from San Nicolas Island. Safety of the public, Navy personnel, aircraft, and ships is the first priority for all Sea Range activities. Targets used in these scenarios are recovered when possible.

Training activities are conducted to ensure that our military services operate at their highest state of readiness. Therefore, the Sea Range supports three general categories of training which include: 1) Fleet training exercises, 2) small-scale amphibious warfare training, and 3) special warfare training.

A **Fleet training exercise, or FLEETEX**, is a coordinated, multi-ship exercise designed around particular training events and scenarios. This type of complex training exercise usually involves units which the Navy would use in combat, (i.e. a Battle Group or some of its components), working together and typically lasts two to three days. A FLEETEX generally involves multiple missile firings, 50 or more aircraft flights, and varied types of surface ships.



Small-scale amphibious warfare training is a type of littoral (coastal) warfare training which is conducted by the Marine Corps and by Navy Special Warfare forces including SEAL Teams (SEAL is an acronym for Sea, Air, and Land). Small-scale amphibious warfare training is currently conducted about four times per year and traditionally consists of small-scale manned raids at pre-approved sites at San Nicolas Island.



Special warfare training is currently conducted about two times per year and generally involves individuals or group activities (less than 30 personnel) performing climbing, clandestine patrolling, observation, and radio communication activities. Helicopters are used for hovering and landing operations and for the transportation of personnel and cargo parachute drops. Special warfare training exercises typically occur at San Nicolas Island.

The Proposed Action

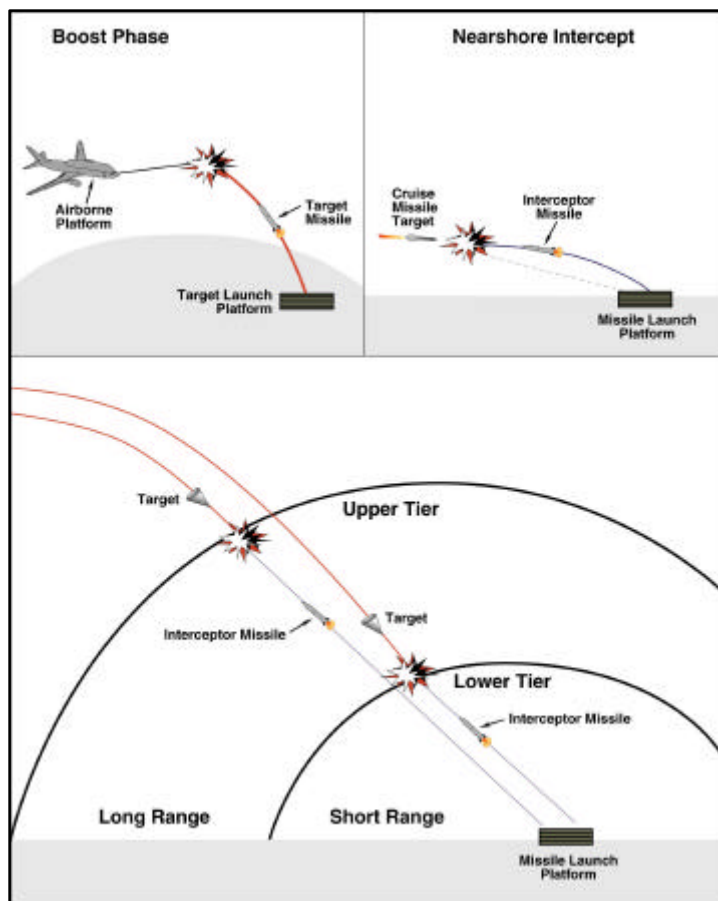
In addition to the current test and training operations conducted on the Sea Range, the Navy proposes to accommodate a new type of testing and training activity, Theater Missile Defense (TMD), and accommodate an increase in the current level of both Fleet training exercises and special warfare training. The Navy also proposes to modernize facilities at NAS Point Mugu and San Nicolas Island to increase the Sea Range's capability to support existing and future operations. The testing, training, and facility modernization elements that comprise the proposed action are described below.

Theater Missile Defense Element

TMD is intended to protect U.S. forces and allies against the threat of short- and long-range missiles. Point Mugu proposes that the Point Mugu Sea Range accommodate four distinct types of TMD testing and training events not currently conducted on the Sea Range: 1) boost phase intercept testing and training (up to three events per year); 2) upper tier (up to three events per year); 3) lower tier (up to three events per year); and 4) nearshore intercept testing and training at San Nicolas Island (up to eight events per year). All but nearshore intercept test and training events differ from current missile testing primarily in the higher altitude of some of the missile flights. The higher altitude means that larger areas of the Sea Range need to be cleared of civilians prior to conducting the test or training event.

Training Element

The Sea Range currently supports two FLEETEXs per year, four small-scale amphibious training exercises per year, and two special warfare training exercises per year. In addition to this current level of training, the Navy proposes to accommodate one additional FLEETEX per year, and two additional special warfare exercises per year (small-scale amphibious training would remain at current levels).



Facility Modernization Element

Facility modernization is proposed for both NAS Point Mugu and San Nicolas Island. The Navy proposes adding the ability to launch missiles from two previously used launch pads (Launch Pad B and C) located along the beach of NAS Point Mugu. The proposed San Nicolas Island modernizations include construction of additional facilities and the addition of two new target launch systems.

The table below summarizes the new construction proposals at San Nicolas Island. Where applicable, estimated areas of disturbance from new construction are also shown in the table.

Modernization Proposals for San Nicolas Island	Total Area of Disturbance
Add vertical missile launcher to existing launch pad	None (build on existing pad)
Construct new launcher for target missiles weighing up to 50,000 pounds	1,200 square foot (.02 acre) concrete pad
Add new Range Support Building	12,000 square foot (.27 acre) construction area
Develop five new multiple-purpose instrumentation sites	15,000 square foot (.34 acre) construction area (each)

Testing and Training Activity Under the Proposed Action

It is important to choose a baseline that accurately reflects the typical Sea Range level of operations and against which relative impacts of the proposed action could be measured. As a result, fiscal year 1995 (FY 95) was chosen as the period being the most representative of baseline operations on the Point Mugu Sea Range. Data from FY 95 are used throughout the Draft EIS as the baseline for evaluating environmental impacts that may result from the proposed testing, training, and facility modernization elements. In general, activity levels can be subdivided into categories which include aircraft flights; ships and boats operating within or near the Sea Range; missile firings; and target launches. The table below represents the baseline operations tempo plus the proposed new activities.

Baseline Plus Proposed Annual Sea Range Activities				
Category	Aircraft Flights	Ships and Boats	Missiles Fired	Targets Launched
Operations Baseline	3,934	799	351	300
Additional Activity from the Proposed Action				
TMD Testing and Training	89	111	20	17
Additional FLEETEX	57	18	34	33
Additional Special Warfare Training	4	32	0	0
Total Proposed Action	150	161	54	50
Total Existing Plus Proposed	4,084	960	405	350

Alternatives Addressed Within This EIS

Three alternatives are analyzed in this EIS. These include the No Action Alternative, the Minimum Components Alternative, and the Preferred Alternative. A comparison of the three alternatives analyzed in this EIS is provided in the table on the next page.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, current test and training operations as explained on the first page would continue. The Sea Range would not accommodate TMD testing and training. In addition, the three types of training activities would continue at current levels, and proposed facility modernizations would not be implemented.

Minimum Components Alternative

This alternative meets the purpose and need of the Proposed Action while minimizing the number of components that would be implemented. If the Minimum Components Alternative is selected, only one component of each element (i.e., TMD, training, and facility modernization) would be implemented. Components analyzed under this alternative include nearshore intercept test and training (TMD element), an additional Fleet Exercise per year (Training Element), and construction of five multiple-purpose instrumentation sites on San Nicolas Island (Facility Modernization Element).

Preferred Alternative

The Preferred Alternative is the Proposed Action. As described earlier, the Proposed Action includes all components of the TMD, Training, and Facility Modernization elements.

Operational Element	Alternatives		
	No Action Alternative	Minimum Components Alternative	Preferred Alternative
Current Operations			
Air-to-Air	Current RDT&E Levels	Current RDT&E Levels	Current RDT&E Levels
Air-to-Surface			
Surface-to-Air			
Surface-to-Surface			
Subsurface-to-Surface			
TMD Element (Per Year)			
Boost Phase Intercept	0	0	3
Upper Tier	0	0	3
Lower Tier	0	0	3
Nearshore Intercept	0	8	8
Training Element (Per Year)			
FLEETEX	2	3	3
Small Scale Amphibious Exercises	2	2	2
Special Warfare	2	2	4
Facility Modernization Element			
NAS Point Mugu	None	None	New Launch Locations
San Nicolas Island	None	- 5 multi-purpose instrumentation sites	- Missile Launcher - Vertical Launcher - Range Support Building - 5 multi-purpose instrumentation sites